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The Question of To-Morrow.

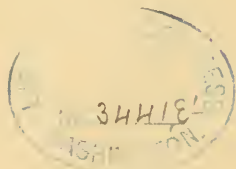
DRAMA: IN FIVE ACTS.

✓
By W. Hazeltine.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GEORGE LEMOYNE.

JUDGE FAIRFAX.

BRAND FAIRFAX (late Colonel C. S. A.)

SILAS BOWLES, M. D.

BLACK JOB,

GASH SILLSBEE, } Negroes.

SNAKY PETE, }

MISS PRISCILLA ENDICOTT.

VIRGINIA FAIRFAX (her niece.)

MAGGIE (Maid to Miss Fairfax.)

Guests, Field Hands, House Servants, &c.

Scene: In the first three acts, Nahant, Mass. In the last two, Fairfax Manor, near Petersburg, Virginia.

Time: 1873; Summer.

ACT I.

SCENE: *The garden of Miss ENDICOTT's villa, at Nahant. At the extreme right, a rocky cliff, with pathway. At the rear, the sea. In the distance, Egg Rock. Time: forenoon.*

[*Discovered: Miss ENDICOTT, seated, and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Miss E. Doctor Bowles, you're the most provoking man on earth! Will you admit nothing?

Dr. B. Madam, I admit facts.

Miss E. Ah, you will! And if a fact defies your theory, what then?

Dr. B. Then, ma'am, I say, regretfully but firmly, I love thee, but never more be theory of mine.

Miss E. Very good. Do you see this letter?

Dr. B. I do.

Miss E. Do you know what it is?

Dr. B. I do. It is an appeal from the financial committee of the Female League.

Miss E. Appeal from fiddlestick!

Dr. B. On closer view I see my error. It is a Report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Car-drivers.

Miss E. This letter is a bombshell. It will go off presently, and there will be one doubt less in that skeptic head. Read it.

Dr. B. Hum! Dated last Wednesday. [*Reads.*] "Dear Madam. Your letter acquainting me with my poor father's death reached me in Paris three weeks ago. The examinations for a medical degree had just been concluded, and it was my good fortune to obtain a prize of some distinction. Upon receipt of your letter I left Paris immediately, and arrived in Boston yesterday. I hope to wait on you at an early day, and express that lively sense of my many obligations with which I have the honor to be, dear madam, your obedient servant, George Lemoyne." Well, ma'am? I find nothing explosive here.

Miss E. Oh, you don't? Well, the writer, George Lemoyne, is a negro!

Dr. B. A nigger! Nonsense.

Miss E. I said a negro.

Dr. B. Well, I suppose from the French West Indies—ninetenths a white man—like Alexander Dumas!

Miss E. That's like you candid men—so open to conviction! Give you an awkward fact, and you can't rest till you've whittled it to nothing. I tell you the fellow is American born, and brown as a chestnut.

Dr. B. Well, ma'am! Well! Do you know much about him?

Miss E. Know George Lemoyne? Why, doctor, you must remember old Jonas Lemoyne, that made such tasty cabinet work? Poor fellow, he was an old man—grown old in slavery—when Farragut took New Orleans. But he saw light ahead then, got on board one of our ships, he and his little boy, and presently turned up in Boston.

Dr. B. And this young man, who writes like an ambassador, is his son?

Miss E. Precisely. He was a lad of ten when his father brought him to my house. I never saw a brighter, braver face! I liked the boy from the start, and tried to be of use to him.

Dr. B. Of course you did. I see it all. You doted him, petted him—sent him to school.

Miss E. No, I didn't. His father did that. He had the pride of an honest man, old Jonas Lemoyne! Besides, he was an artist in his way. His work paid him well, and he toiled and saved for George.

Dr. B. And sent him to France to finish his education? The old darkey aimed high, didn't he?

Miss E. No! That was my idea. I told his father there were larger opportunities in Paris. I *could* not tell him that here—here in our own Massachusetts, which the old man took for paradise—our prejudices had outlived our creeds. But I knew well enough, if he sent George to a New England college, what an atmosphere of gracious condescension, of good-natured scorn, would kill his self-respect.

Dr. B. Miss Endicott, my heart honors you! But after all—frankly now—you have made a social experiment. You deserve to succeed, no doubt! But success is not proven.

Miss E. Didn't George take a Doctor's degree, and prizes, and all that, at the best school of medicine in the world?

Dr. B. Madam! Madam! Many a man knows treatises by heart, and writes them, too, for that matter, who can't handle a lancet. I tell you, ma'am, in our profession mere book knowledge, without a special talent to adapt and correct and test it, is worse than useless, it is deadly!

Miss E. Special talent, indeed! What is that, pray?

Dr. B. Well, patience for one thing! And—wait a moment—logic for another!

Miss E. Dear, me!

Dr. B. Don't smile, ma'am! When you ask a man to explain, you must take the consequences. I say, a logic that stifles imagination, a patience that defies distraction! Has a nigger these? Ridiculous!

Miss E. Doctor Bowles, you'll make me angry! You've no right to say that. Where are your facts?

Dr. B. Why, if you consider the influence of climate during long periods—if you glance at the skulls—

Miss E. I knew it. Did you ever talk five minutes without coming back to *skulls*? Give you an edifying sermon, and you hint spitefully at the wide difference—in skulls! Show you a pretty girl, and you fall to musing—upon skulls!

[*Enter left, Miss FAIRFAX and MAGGIE. The former is blind, and pushes a cane before her.*]

Miss E. [*Aside to Dr. B.*] Talking of pretty girls, there comes my neice! Oh, doctor! Man of science! Can't you give light to that young face?

Dr. B. [*Aside, &c.*] I fear not, ma'am. If I could give her strength, I should be satisfied. She's too fragile for this rough world.

Virginia. I was sure I heard auntie's voice!

Miss E. Here, darling; here I am. And here is another old friend of yours.

Virg. I know who it is. Doctor Bowles, who always brings me a noesgay! And he has one now, hasn't he?

Dr. B. Indeed I have. [*Presents flowers.*] So the old man has a foolish place in his heart yet, and you've found it, eh?

Virg. How kind you are. Do you know I think I must enjoy flowers even more than you do—fragrant flowers, I mean.

Dr. B. Why so, my dear?

Virg. Because, you know, I cannot see pretty things, as others can; and so sweet sounds and smells are doubly precious.

Miss E. Virgie, you must persuade Doctor Bowles to stay and lunch with us.

Virg. Why, of course he will. He always does as I wish him—don't you, Doctor? And we will lunch out of doors, mayn't we, where we can hear the waves breaking?

Miss E. To be sure we will. But I've a letter to write first, with some odious accounts in it. Oh, Doctor, I do wish you would glance over them.

Virg. Aunt Endicott has no end of official business.

Dr. B. Your aunt, my dear, is treasurer of more impecunious societies than any woman I ever heard of. Whenever their funds run short, they elevate *her* to that position.

Miss E. [*Going.*] Now, Virgie, don't go near those dreadful rocks. Maggie, be careful of Miss Fairfax.

Maggie. Be aisy, mum. Wasn't I always that same?

[*Exeunt, left, Miss ENDICOTT and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Virg. Maggie!

Maggie. What would ye have, darlint?

Virg. Show me the pleasant seat you found for me yesterday.

Maggie. Sure I will, Miss. [*Leads her.*] There—sit ye down. Isn't it the illigant sate?

Virg. Oh, Maggie, I wish I had some of those nice smooth things, that grow on the rocks, that feel like velvet—seaweed you called them.

Maggie. Sae wade, miss. Rest aisy now and ye'll have your fill. [*Goes among the rocks at extreme right.*]

[*Enter LEMOYNE, right.*]

Virg. What is that! A strange step! [*Starts up.*] *Maggie!*
Maggie Coming, miss. Sure, I'm afther the wades.

Lemoyne. I beg pardon. Let me not disturb you. [*Aside.*]
Poor girl, she's blind.

Virg. [*Aside.*] It is a kind voice.

Lemoyne. I fear I am mistaken. I came to see Miss Endicott. The driver left me at the gate yonder.

Virg. You are quite right. This is my aunt's house. She will be here in a moment, if you don't mind waiting; or will you go to the house?

Lemoyne. Thanks. Nothing could be pleasanter than this. I doubt if the scene could be matched anywhere.

Virg. Aunt Endicott would be pleased, I'm sure. She loves to sing the praises of Nahant. And I, too, like it. One is never lonely beside these waves. Sometimes they boom like the thunder, and sometimes they ripple merrily; but they are never silent. [*Tries to regain her seat.*]

Lemoyne. Permit me to assist you. And Miss Endicott is a relative of yours? She is well, I hope. I have not seen her for well nigh ten years.

Virg. Auntie is in perfect health. Did you know her well?

Lemoyne. She was—she is—the best friend I have. I think there is no better woman on this earth.

Maggie. [*Comes forward.*] Now ye'll have the illigant wades, miss.

Lemoyne. [*To MAGGIE.*] You have an armful. Let me relieve you. [*Takes seaweed from MAGGIE and places them beside VIRGINIA.*]

Maggie. [*Aside.*] Sure and he's the foine gintleman. But the black face on him! I'm thinking he's a Portygee, or a Mexican; they're black as devils!

[*Enter, left, Miss ENDICOTT and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Virg. [*To LEMOYNE.*] There is auntie. I know her step.

Lemoyne. [*Advancing.*] Dear Miss Endicott, don't you know me—George Lemoyne?

Miss E. Why, George, what a pleasure! I would know your voice at once. But how you've grown!

Lemoyne. I've had time, you know.

Miss E. Doctor Bowles, Mr. Lemoyne. We were talking of you, George. My niece, Miss Fairfax.

Dr. B. [*To Lemoyne.*] Glad to hear, sir, that you have chosen my profession. A doctor need never shut his eyes to truth. I'm afraid our brothers of pulpit and bar can't say as much.

Miss E. [*To MAGGIE.*] Tell John he may serve lunch on the terrace.

Lemoyne. [*Brings forward a rustic chair to Miss ENDICOTT.*] Allow me.

Miss E. [*Sits down.*] And so, George, you've come home to your own country an educated man! You must make your mark for *my* sake.

Lemoyne. Believe me, I would work hard to win your approval.

Dr. B. That's right, young man. Work hard. Don't rely on your education. It has given you tools, that's all! But the wise eye and the cunning hand, it can't give those.

Miss E. [*To VIRGINIA, who has risen and moved toward the right.*] Virgie, dear; wait for Maggie.

Virg. I'll not go far.

Miss E. [*To Dr. B.*] I'm sure George has energy enough. He has proved it.

Dr. B. Well, Ma'am, I hope he has. [*To LEMOYNE.*] What line of practise have you thought of?

Lemoyne. I should prefer, sir, to take up a specialty.

Miss E. Oh, no, George. Be a regular doctor,—like my old friend here.

Dr. B. God forbid, ma'am! I'm a family physician—that is, a humbug.

Miss E. Ha, ha! I'll remember that, when your next bill comes in.

Dr. B. And quite right, too. But at least I own my shortcomings. And when any man pretends to a competent knowledge of physic and surgery, in all their branches, I say he lies, and knows he lies!

Lemoyne. It is not easy, sir, as you suggest, to keep pace with science, even in one direction.

Miss E. But what sort of a doctor do you mean to be?

Lemoyne. An oculist.

Miss E. An oculist? How delightful! There are a thousand questions I want to ask you.

Lemoyne. Doctor Bowles will tell you that a beginner should ask questions, not answer them.

Dr. B. Young man, you talk well, and you have chosen well. The field is large enough. Every third man you meet has weak eyes.

Lemoyne. Of late years, sir, diseases of the eye have been much studied.

Dr. B. No doubt, sir. Unluckily, there are organic troubles which defy treatment. I speak feelingly, as my old friend knows.

Lemoyne. [*To Miss ENDICOTT.*] Miss Fairfax has been blind from birth?

Miss E. No; but she was a mere baby when she had a terrible fever—typhus, wasn't it, Doctor? The poor child recovered, but her sight was gone.

Dr. B. And lucky I thought her, to escape so lightly. There was congestion, you understand, and inflammation. The eyes got their share. In a word, the optic nerve was paralyzed.

Lemoyne. It well might be, surely. And yet, Doctor—May I tell you what I noticed just now?

Dr. B. Why not? I gave up the case years ago. Say what you please.

Lemoyne. Well, when this young lady moves, you see no stooping, no painful uncertainty. She walks firmly, with head erect. Am I not right? And when you speak, her eyes converge towards you, naturally. No vacant stare.

Miss E. [*To Dr. B.*] They do; that's a fact.

Lemoyne. You must have observed, too, when she turns her eyes toward the light, the pupils dilate just like yours and mine.

Miss E. Yes, yes. What then?

Lemoyne. Why then the retina must be sensible to light. It may not be the optic nerve, after all, which is diseased. It may be—

Dr. B. Cataract. That's what you're driving at. [*To Miss ENDICOTT.*] He means, ma'am, she may be cured. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Well, well, young man. I don't say it isn't possible.

[*Enter MAGGIE, right.*]

Lemoyne. [*To Dr. B.*] There are other tests which will occur to you, Doctor. They would be decisive.

Miss E. Would they? Oh, I'm crazy to try them. Maggie, go find Miss Fairfax.

Maggie. Lunch is ready, mum.

[*Exit MAGGIE, right.*]

Dr. B. [*Shakes hands with LEMOYNE.*] Sir, I am obliged to Miss Endicott for your acquaintance. I'm the gainer by it already. I find I have plenty to learn.

Lemoyne. Only those, Doctor, who have taught many, will confess that.

[*During the last five minutes VIRGINIA is seen moving along the cliff at the extreme right of the stage.*]

Maggie. [*Emerging at extreme right.*] Holy Vargin! She's among the rocks! Stop, Miss! Miss Vargie!

Virg. [*Slips and catches upon a narrow ledge.*] Oh, dear! Where am I?

Maggie. Oh, murther! Help! She's kilt intirely!

Miss E. Mercy on us! She'll be over the cliff! Don't you move, darling! Doctor! George!

Lemoyne. Quick! Give him your shawl! Be calm, madam. Quick, Doctor!

[*LEMOYNE and Doctor BOWLES run out along the cliff.*]

Lemoyne. Steady, Miss Fairfax? [*Jumps.*]

Dr. B. Good God!—he's missed it! No, he's up! He has her! [*Flings one end of shawl.*] All right! Hurrah!

Miss E. Thank Heaven—and my boy!

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

SCENE: *Drawing room in Miss ENDICOTT's villa. Long windows opening on piazza. View of the sea.*

[*Enter, left, Doctor BOWLES and MAGGIE.*]

Maggie. Sit ye down, Docther, till I tell the misthress ye'z come.

Dr. B. Thank you. How is Miss Fairfax to-day?

Maggie. She's jist illigant. Sure she's after walking in the verandy wi' the furrin gentileman. Bless the black face on him.

[*Exit MAGGIE, right.*]

Dr. B. Foreign gentleman! There's a shrewd compromise with prejudice! Tell my Irish friend here, that this Lemoyne is a negro—the son of a slave—and she'd despise him. But she sees us treat him like an equal, and so takes him for what he is—a gentleman.

[*Enter Miss ENDICOTT.*]

Miss E. Glad to see you, Doctor. Glad your patients can spare you.

Dr. B. My patients, ma'm, could spare me much oftener than they think. Talking of my patients, have you spoken to your niece about this proposed operation?

Miss E. You know I wrote to Judge Fairfax, and he ought to have arrived before this. Her father can do it better than I.

Dr. B. I don't know that. By the way, I met some one coming here from the telegraph office. He gave me this [*presents telegram*].

Miss E. [*Opens and reads.*] My brother-in-law ill! Well, I never. What am I to do now? Read.

Dr. B. [*Reads.*] "Detained by illness. Will come soon as possible. Go on with operation, if Doctor Bowles approves. Robert Fairfax." Hum! "If Doctor Bowles approves." I don't like this at all.

Miss E. Of course, you don't. We can't expect George to wait much longer. And there's no telling when the Judge will come. Oh, dear, and I had been so sanguine.

Dr. B. Oh, yes. You had faith enough for two. But you must wait, of course. You must make the best of it.

Miss E. But I decline to make the best of it. What, and leave Virgie in her blindness? How can you be so callous! What a fool I am to expect sympathy from a docter.

Dr. B. My dear madam, I'm not callous. I'm only cautious.

Miss E. Cautious! You saw George test Virgie's eyes. You admitted his notion of the trouble was right; you confessed an operation was desirable. And now! I do believe you're envious. You don't want the young man to succeed.

Dr. B. Eh? What? You dear old pepper-box.

Miss E. Well, why shouldn't the operation go on? Why not to-day? George is in the house. You see her father's telegram.

Dr. B. Would you have me shoulder the responsibility?

[*Enter Miss FAIRFAX and LEMOYNE from veranda. Left window.*]

Miss E. Nonsense. Don't I share it? Hush! There's Virgini. Come into the library. Oh, you obstinate, antiquated, prejudiced old mule.

[*Exeunt Miss ENDICOTT and Doctor BOWLES, right.*]

Lemoyne. [*To VIRG.*] This way. Pardon me; there is a step here; so. This, I think, is your favorite seat.

Virg. [*Sits down on sofa at left.*] You are very good. But tell me how you guessed I liked this seat?

Lemoyne. [*Leans on back of sofa.*] Because—just here—you may catch the sea-breeze and hear the waves.

Virg. Ah, yes. They are companions, in their way. Do you know that utter silence really frightens me?

Lemoyne. I can imagine it. Much as a desert would fatigue the eye. But how fond you must be of music.

Virg. It is the greatest joy I have. When I am alone I dream of it. And the other day, when you described that midnight mass to Aunt Endicott, I seemed to hear it. I wonder why it is, Mr. Lemoyne, that I like your stories of travel better than other people's. Shall I tell you what I think?

Lemoyne. Tell me.

Virg. Why, they always talk of what they *saw*, and that, you know, I can't understand. But you speak oftenest of concerts, operas, masses—things you have heard—and all these I enter into and enjoy. And do you know—

Lemoyne. Do I know?

Virg. I fancied sometimes that you remembered how unfortunate one of your listeners was, and out of good nature—

Lemoyne. And if I did?

Virg. Then I am grateful—indeed I am. Not many would be so thoughtful.

Lemoyne. [*After a pause.*] You seem pensive to-day. You miss your Virginian home?

Virg. Oh, no, if father were here. At Fairfax, you know, music is out of the question, except plantation songs; and the slaves sing so absurdly.

Lemoyne. Slaves! You do not mean—I thought—

Virg. Of course not really. But the same negroes remain on

the place, and sometimes one forgets, and calls them by the old name. They are such a plague to us. Were you ever in the South?

Lemoyne. Yes; many years ago.

Virg. Then you know what negroes were; but father says they are far worse now. It is quite amusing to hear the epithets he heaps on them. Deceitful, lazy, quarrelsome, are the mildest.

Lemoyne. They are very ignorant, are they not? Ignorance is often brutal.

Virg. Is that all, do you think? Father says black men cannot be educated.

Lemoyne. Because they are black?

Virg. I suppose so. But, pray tell me—it has puzzled me so often—what do they mean by *white* and *black*? What is the difference?

Lemoyne. The difference? [*Aside.*] Answer her, wise law-givers. Make the blind understand it, if you can.

Virg. There was my old nurse, Aunt Chloe. Her face was hard and rough. Does black mean *rough*?

Lemoyne. I think not.

Virg. Has it not something to do with the *voice*? I know I never mistook a negro's voice. There were such coarse, rude tones in it. 'Twas never clear and steady, like a gentleman's voice—like—

Lemoyne. Like—?

Virg. I shall not flatter you, sir. I shall not say what I think of yours.

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] They have not told her what I am. Must I do it? [*Aloud, to VIRG.*] Miss Fairfax.

Virg. Do you not agree with me, that it is safe to judge of people by the voice?

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] God help me! I cannot tell her! [*Aloud, to VIRG.*] I think the voice is an index—of breeding, certainly; perhaps of character. But not always trustworthy.

Virg. Is what they call *complexion* a better test?

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] Will she go on? [*Aloud, to VIRG.*] The expression of a face may be, but, I think, not the color. I fear those words mean little to you.

Virg. Ah, no. They mean nothing. I must trust my ear.

Lemoyne. Are you sure, quite sure—that you trust it fully?

Virg. Why, how gravely you said that!

Lemoyne. And you believe those base qualities your father gave him, belong to the negro, because your ear detected them in his voice?

Virg. Yes.

Lemoyne. But if his voice told a different story, if your ear dwelt without annoyance, perhaps even with pleasure, on his accents,—then, what then?

Virg. Then I should believe him to be a gentleman—to be really what they call *white*—like you and me.

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] Heaven bless her.

[*Enter, right, Miss ENDICOTT and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Dr. B. [*To Virg.*] How is my young invalid this morning?

Virg. Do I deserve to be called that, Mr. Lemoyne? Pray, Doctor—

Dr. B. My dear?

Virg. Why is it that you are so nice and sympathetic to me, and so incredulous—you know you are—of poor auntie's ailments?

Miss E. So you make fun of your old aunt, do you? Oh, Virgie! As for the Doctor, he is a savage!—Well, gentlemen, may I send you away for a few minutes? I have something to say to my neice.

Dr. B. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Come, sir. It seems we are banished.

Miss E. [*Sits down on sofa at right.*] You'll find lunch in the dining-room.

[*Exeunt, right, LEMOYNE and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Virg. What is it, aunt?

Miss E. My dear neice, I had a telegram this morning, from your father.

Virg. [*Rises, and comes forward.*] Oh, what is the matter? He is not ill?

Miss E. Not seriously, I think. But he may be detained a week or two. He was on his way to us.

Virg. Father coming here! Oh, aunt, I shall be so happy. But you did not expect him, surely?

Miss E. Perhaps I did. Sit down, darling, beside me. Virgie, you love your old aunt, don't you?

Virg. After father, best of all the world.

Miss E. You don't think I would do anything, recommend anything, to harm my darling, my only sister's only child?

Virg. No, dear; no, indeed.

Miss E. Tell me, Virgie. When your father comes, would you not like to see him?

Virg. You mean, *meet* him, don't you? Of course I shall not see him as others will. But he will take me in his arms and kiss me, and I shall hear his voice again.

Miss E. But would you not like to *see* him, really see him?

Virg. Oh, auntie, auntie! What do you mean?

Miss E. I mean that I think—we all think—your sight may be recovered.

Virg. Heavens! And I see my father! With these eyes! See you! See—

Miss E. Listen, dearest. Mr. Lemoyne, as you know, is an oculist. Well, Doctor Bowles and he have made up their minds

that your blindness, dear, is not incurable. On the contrary, they hope, they believe, it can be cured by a very simple operation.

Virg. Oh, let it be done to-day, dear aunt? Why not to-day?

Miss E. Exactly what I think. Why not? I expected your father several days ago. Doctor Bowles has had everything ready, and Mr. Lemoyne consented to put off his journey. And now your father telegraphs to go on, if Doctor Bowles approves. But I never thought to find you so willing. My own brave girl.

Virg. Brave, auntie. Why do you say that? Does it need courage to accept a blessing?

Miss E. But, darling, you do not understand. I did not tell you—you may suffer pain.

[*Enter MAGGIE, right.*]

Maggie. Did ye ring, mum?

Miss E. No; I did not. But you may ask the gentlemen to come here. They are in the dining-room, I believe.

Maggie. They is, mum. And they've got a case of knives betwixt 'em, mum—the sharpest ever you or I seen—and they're handling them that free, they might be clothespins.

[*Exit, MAGGIE, right.*]

Virg. Knives! What does she mean? Tell me! Tell me!

Miss E. My dearest child. Don't tremble so. The operation will need a sharp instrument, but I hope—I am sure—the pain is brief —

Virg. My hand—hold my hand fast! Oh, aunt, I am afraid.

[*Enter, right, LEMOYNE, Doctor BOWLES and MAGGIE.*]

Miss E. I have spoken to my niece, and she is willing the experiment should be tried—to-day—at once; are you not, dear?

Virg. I am.

Dr. B. That's my brave girl! [*Aside, to LEMOYNE.*] Well, sir, shall we go on? She'll grow more nervous every hour.

Virg. One word, Doctor! Tell me the whole truth. Is there no danger—of worse than pain?

Dr. B. Eh? What? No! That is, not — with a trained and steady hand.

Virg. I understand. And whose hand—will it be?

Miss E. Mr. Lemoyne's, dear.

Virg. Does he—does Mr. Lemoyne—think it can be done? Stop, auntie, if you please! I want to hear his voice.

Lemoyne. I do believe it can.

Virg. And will you do it?

Lemoyne. With God's help, I will!

Virg. I am ready.

[*Music.*]

Dr. B. [*To MAGGIE.*] Darken the further window. Now raise the shade here. [*Seats VIRG. beside the bright window.*] My dear young lady, allow me to place you in this position. There! [*To LEMOYNE.*] Just a drop of belladonna, eh? [*Touches VIRG.'s eyes with hair pencil.*] So. Many ladies do that every day!

Virg. Close, auntie, closer. My hand in yours.

Lemoyne. [*To Dr. B.*] Clasp the forehead; firmly—so. [*Stands at right side of VIRG.*] Now, I am ready. [*To VIRG.*] I charge you, be very still.

[*Music.*]

Dr. B. Bravo, sir! I can't help it.

Lemoyne. [*Passes to left side of VIRG.*] Hush! [*To VIRG.*] Courage. One moment more.

[*Music.*]

Miss E. Is it done? Is it over?

Lemoyne. [*Steps back a few paces.*] Hush! [*To VIRG.*] Miss Fairfax!

Virg. [*Springs up and staggers toward him.*] I see! I see! George! George!

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT III.

[*Same scene as First Act. Moonlight. Guests in evening dress traverse the stage. Music.*]

[*Enter, left, VIRGINIA, leaning on the arm of Doctor BOWLES, and LEMOYNE. VIRGINIA carries in her hand a green shade for the eyes, but does not use it.*]

Virg. [*To LEMOYNE.*] But why New Orleans? I'm sure Richmond would be better. Would it not, Doctor?

Dr. B. [*Brings forward a chair.*] Eh? Here; sit down, my dear. What about Richmond?

Lemoyne. I was saying to Miss Fairfax, sir, that I meant to practice my profession somewhere in the South, and she suggested Richmond.

Dr. B. What—for you? Don't think of it. The worst place in the whole country.

Virg. Don't let him abuse my people, Mr. Lemoyne. Demand his reasons.

Dr. B. It's plain enough. Because, why because—[*Aside.*] Oh, hang it, I can't fling a man's color in his face. [*To VIRG.*] The fact is, you know, that Richmond, since the war, has become impoverished—not the same place at all.

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] What a true gentleman he is. That's not his reason. [*To Dr. B.*] I think I understand your objection. Does it apply to New Orleans?

Dr. B. No, sir. But there's another, just as good. You're neither rogue, ruffian, nor demagogue—what else thrives in New Orleans to-day? When taxes swallow the rent, where's the doctor's fee to come from? No, young man. I like you, I wish you well. Take my advice, try the West Indies. Go to Martinique.

Virg. Oh, Doctor! Leave his country?

Dr. B. Nonsense, child. Where a man's happy, *that's* his country. [*To LEMOYNE.*] I'm serious; try Martinique. In the first place, the people are French. That is, they haven't certain prejudices which we Americans have. You know that. Then they are rich, generous, hospitable. Cast your lot with them, and you'll be happy.

Lemoyme. And if I stay here?

Dr. B. You are a doomed man.

Virg. Fie, Doctor; what an ugly word. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Don't listen to him.

Dr. B. [*To LEMOYNE.*] You guess what I mean. You happen to be—well—a person of dark complexion. You also happen to be a gentleman. That is, a social anomaly. That is, a social victim. Don't submit to it; go to Martinique.

Lemoyme. Never, sir. I am a son of this country, and, though she prove a hard mother, I must bear with her, and love her still.

[*Enter, right, Miss ENDICOTT.*]

Miss E. Ah, gentlemen! I hope you like my fête. Dear me, how grave you look. Do you know, Virgie, there is dancing yonder. On the terrace. The young people have formed a quadrille.

Virg. Oh, charming! I should love to look on.

Lemoyme. [*Offers his arm.*] Shall we go?

Miss E. Wear your shade, dear. Ought she not, George?

Lemoyme. Her eyes seem quite strong.—She has been so patient—

Virg. Thank you, sir. [*To Miss E.*] I don't need it, really. [*Exeunt LEMOYNE and VIRGINIA, right.*]

Miss E. [*Sits herself.*] What a relief to steal five minutes, rest.

Dr. B. Well, ma'am, your social experiment, I confess, seems to have succeeded.

Miss E. Of course it has. My friends are sensible people.

Dr. B. I was prepared, you know, to see them civil enough to Doctor Lemoyme after what we said of him. But I expected, I must say—

Miss E. Expected what, pray?

Dr. B. Why a tone of half-disguised superiority—of polite endurance—the most galling thing in the world.

Miss E. I should like to know which of them is superior to

George, in cleverness, education, or manners. He is a gentleman—he is a man. You can't beat that.

Dr. B. Still, ma'am, outside of Boston—as I was just telling him—

Miss E. Outside of Boston, my dear, is a howling wilderness. For my part I expect ignorance and prejudice from savages.

Dr. B. Ha, ha! Well, I think one of those savages, as you call them, is pretty well converted to your opinions.

Miss E. Whom do you mean?

Dr. B. A very gentle savage—Miss Fairfax.

Miss E. Virginia Fairfax is my niece. Besides, considering what the young man has done, she may well be civil to him.

Dr. B. Civil? I wish young ladies would be as *civil* to me. What! Didn't you notice, the first word she uttered, when she gained her sight, was his Christian name?

Miss E. I noticed nothing of the kind. I had other things to think of, at such a moment. Besides, what of it? She was grateful to him. I call him George.

Dr. B. You call him George! Ha, ha! [*VIRG. and LEMOYNE traverse the stage, rear, and exeunt, left.*] Seriously, my friend, how would Judge Fairfax, think ye, relish that sight yonder?

Miss E. Well, if he knew what we know, and I shall tell him, he would consider it right and proper. Why shouldn't he?

Dr. B. How old is he?

Miss E. Let me see. The Judge must be near seventy, now.

Dr. B. Too old—to learn. Not too old—to remember.

[*Enter MAGGIE, left.*]

Maggie. There's an old gentleman, Mum—'come in a kerridge. Sure he says he's your brother. And a young man they calls Kernel, mum.

Miss E. It's the Judge, at last. Maggie, find Miss Fairfax. Say her father has arrived. Come with me, Doctor.

[*Exit MAGGIE, right.*]

Dr. B. [*Offers his arm.*] Who is the young man—this "Kernel"?

Miss E. Oh, his nephew—Brand. The less said of him the better! [*Exeunt Miss ENDICOTT and Doctor BOWLES, left.*]

[*Music. Guests traverse the stage.*]

[*Enter, left, (rear of stage,) VIRGINIA and LEMOYNE.*]

Lemoyne. You are tired; let me find you a seat. [*Brings chair.*] Is it not charming here?—that island—the bold coast—and moonlight silvering the whole.

Virg. And that is moonlight. Think how wonderful it is to me, when even common things are mysteries. Oh, I have lived years in the last week.

Lemoyne. And is the world as beautiful as you dreamed?

Virg. A paradise! But do you know what corner of my Eden I like the best?

Lemoyne. I could never guess.

Virg. Those rocks yonder.

Lemoyne. They have a rugged grandeur of their own.

Virg. Ah, yes. But Aunt Endicott says 'twas there you saved me from an ugly fall, the morning of your arrival. That was in my sightless days.

Lemoyne. You lost your footing—that was all. You'll not need help of the kind again.

Virg. Thank Heaven—and you.

Lemoyne. Believe me, you owe me nothing. The little I had to do another would have done as well.

Lemoyne. Aunt Endicott and Doctor Bowles don't think so. Oh, Mr. Lemoyne, how *can* I repay you?

Lemoyne. By telling me, frankly, if you find your debt to me—since you *will* call it so—a weight, a burden? Does it not—wound your pride?

Virg. Pride! Burden! Let me tell you. When I look about me, sometimes, at this brave, new world, I forget everything, everybody, in my giddy joy. Then, suddenly, I remember that these delights were not always mine—that they were opened to me by your hands! And I am happier for the thought.

Lemoyne. You speak kindly, Miss Fairfax. Kind words are very sweet—from you to me.

Virg. They are only words. If I might *do* something —

Lemoyne. Do something! You have done everything. I was very lonely. You have been my friend. I was full of bitterness—ay, hatred—when I met you first. I have learned patience. Ah, you know not how bleak the future looked. While now, this scrambling world, that seemed so hard, so base, touched by your gentle hand is radiant with a noble meaning. I see Hope there, and Justice. I see high aims, and gracious charities; what else could thrive in the fine atmosphere of your kind thoughts!

Virg. What help could I, a foolish girl—Oh, Mr. Lemoyne, you needed none.

Lemoyne. Miss Fairfax, hear me. There are things which I thought—I thought a man's pride could smother. But my heart is swollen. Let me speak. I was a mere lad when they sent me to Europe—young enough, they supposed to forget—yet I carried some memories with me that were hard to heal. I went to Paris. In that old quarter, where I lived, I learned to love my fellow men, for they liked and encouraged me. They were poor, those students, like myself; but they were rich in hope and joy—faith in the future and themselves—and that wealth they shared with me. I was with them in their amuse-

ments, their studies, their aspirations; the comrade of their brighter and their graver hours. Brave, generous hearts!

Virg. Go on.

Lemoyne. They are terrible radicals, Miss Fairfax. Birth, station, money—everything which prudent men respect—these absurd youths despise. What has he done with his brain? What can he do for his race? They ask no more. These notions are infectious. I caught them. I gained self-reliance, self-respect. I began to work, to look forward; to aspire; till at length I grew to be like all the rest of them—a visionary, an enthusiast, a fool. I forgot my color, because they did. They told me I was a man, and I believed them.

Virg. And will not the whole world—believe it?

Lemoyne. I soon found others were less credulous. You shall hear. My student days were over. It was time to do man's work with men. I was preparing to leave Paris, when I heard of my father's death. It was a heavy blow, but youth is buoyant. How could I measure my loss when I supposed all men my friends? I came to Havre. How my heart throbbed as I touched the deck of the steamer which was to bear me home. The home of freedom and equality! Where caste, and privilege, and prejudice were only spectres of the past! How often had my comrades pointed with rapture to that western land whose history they called the Bible of Republics—whose very name was a tocsin to the poor. Sail on! they cried, into the sunlight! the mists and shadows are all behind!

Virg. Oh, yes, yes; and they spoke truly.

Lemoyne. That evening—the first night out—I went down to dinner. I had scarcely taken my seat when several persons rose, with indignant looks, and left the table. I asked a gentleman next me—he was a Frenchman—what was the matter? He shrugged his shoulders. They are Americans, he said, don't mind them. Would you believe it, I was so naive, so dull, I never guessed the meaning of that scene. By and by I went on deck, and found the same persons grouped around the captain. They scowled and whispered as I passed. Presently a steward approached and bade me, roughly, come aft, the captain wanted me. I walked up to the captain. "Young man," he said, "henceforward you'll take your meals alone." I did not understand him. I reminded him that I was a cabin passenger, and had the rights of one. "Rights!" cried he, "What right have you to eat with white men? They'd sooner eat with a dog!" I forgot where I was. I forgot the man was captain of the ship, and I felled him on his own deck.

Virg. Oh, 'twas well done.

Lemoyne. 'Twas folly. That night I was in irons.

Virg. Just Heaven! you?

Lemoyne. Oh, yes. They kept them on till we reached New York. They meant to teach the nigger a lesson. Well, I learned

it. Miss Fairfax, you have listened kindly. Is it strange, think you, that I landed on my native shores a hard and desperate man—that the trustful boy was dead?

Virg. [*Weeping.*] Do not—do not say so. Do not speak so bitterly.

Lemoyne. Forgive me. I never looked for this. Heaven bless you for those tears! Indeed—indeed I am not bitter now.

Virg. And are you—happy here?

Lemoyne. Happy? With you!

Virg. George—

Lemoyne. Miss Fairfax! Virginia! Can you? Do you? [*Takes her hand.*] My God, I thank thee.

Virg. [*After a pause.*] And do you really care for me?

Lemoyne. I love you. As famished men love bread—as drowning eyes love the last glimpse of sunlight. Do I love you? But you, dearest. Do you remember who you are and what I am?

Virg. I know that you are dark and I am fair. That you are wise, and brave, and noble—I need no eyes to tell me that. Did you give me sight, sir, to blind my heart?

Lemoyne. Those gracious words—too sweet, too gracious for this stubborn world. Your father—you love him dearly?

Virg. Oh, father? He would never grieve me. Indeed, you wrong him. Think, George, how much he owes you. And if I ask him to pay the debt?

Lemoyne. Ah, dearest, dearest! Pray heaven you read him rightly.

[*Enter MAGGIE, right.*]

Maggie. Is it yeself, darlint? Sure I thought ye was lost. Yez wanted, Miss. There's an old gentleman at the house. By the same token, he's yer own father.

Virg. Father here! [*Rises.*] Oh, now I am perfectly happy! Come, George. Oh, hark! I hear his voice!

[*Enter, right, Judge FAIRFAX, BRAND, Miss ENDICOTT, Doctor BOWLES.*]

Judge F. Quite so, my dear sister; and you, Brand, ought to feel, that for a young man in his position, to achieve such distinction is highly creditable. But where is Virginia?

Virg. [*Coming forward.*] Father!

Judge F. [*Embracing her.*] My darling child! And you can really see your old father? Look, sister; her mother's eyes!

Virg. They are happy eyes to-day. Let me hold your face, dear—so! What a kind, handsome, old face it is. And to think your little girl can see it! Is it not a blessed change?

Judge F. I thank God for it. But Doctor Lemoyne—where is he? I must thank him, too.

Virg. Indeed you must, father. [*Presents LEMOYNE.*] This is the gentleman to whom we owe so much.

Brand. [*Aside to Miss ENDICOTT.*] Gentleman! Good God!

Miss E. [*Aside to BRAND.*] Silence, sir.

Judge F. [*To LEMOYNE.*] You have done me a great service, and yourself great credit. I'm told you mean to go South to practice among your own people. You can't do better. I may not see you again, but I shall not forget my obligations. Remember that; and hark ye, draw on me for what you like.

Lemoyme. You mistake, sir. You owe me no money. I was a guest in Miss Endicott's house. What I did was done in a friendly way, not professionally.

Brand. [*Aside to JUDGE F.*] You hear the fellow? Didn't I tell you? Guest! D——n his insolence!

Judge F. [*Aside to BRAND.*] Be still, Brand. [*To LEMOYNE.*] I am sorry you'll accept nothing from me. Never mind, you may think better of it. Should you ever want a favor, ask it.

Brand. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Why don't you take your fee and be off?

Miss E. [*To BRAND.*] For shame!

Lemoyme. [*To JUDGE F.*] I understand you. You shall understand me. I do want a fee, and I will ask it now.

Judge F. Name it.

Lemoyme. This lady, sir.

Judge F. What! Great Heaven! What do you mean by that?

Brand. Let me deal with the black scoundrel.

Dr. Bowles. [*To BRAND.*] Will you keep still, sir!

Lemoyme. [*To JUDGE F.*] I mean that I love this lady, and she has promised to be my wife.

Judge F. You insolent rascal. [*To VIRG.*] Tell him he lies.

Virg. [*Clinging to her father's arm.*] Dearest father, don't you love me any more? Don't you love your little girl? Think, dear, I had fallen on those dreadful rocks—come, I will show you—and he saved me. I was blind—I could not see you, father—and he gave me sight. I love him.

Judge F. Almighty Father! [*Thrusts VIRG. aside.*] Miss Fairfax, will you listen, if you please. That man may be a surgeon, but he is also a negro. The son of a slave—himself a slave but yesterday.

Miss E. Judge! Brother!

Judge F. [*To Miss E.*] With your leave, madam. [*To VIRG.*] You hear now what he is. You know who I am. Are you my daughter?

Virg. Father!

Judge F. It is well. Now mark me! Cleave to that—that black rascal—and by the memory of your mother, ay, Virginia, though it broke my heart, I will curse the day when you were born.

Virg. [*Falls fainting at his feet.*] Oh, father!

Miss E. Oh, brother, you are very hard.

Lemoyne. [To JUDGE F.] Sir, you love self better than that poor girl. I love not so. I leave you.

Judge F. Go, sir!

Lemoyne. I go. That God above us, who sees the color of our souls, shall judge between you and me.

Curtain falls. End of Act 3.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST: *A country road near Fairfax Manor. At rear of stage a tobacco field. In the distance the Manor House. On the left Sillsbee's cabin. Field hands seen leaving work.*

[GASH SILLSBEE and BLACK JOB discovered.]

Sillsbee. Out of work, Job? How's dat? Fust-class nigger like you.

Job. Who gib work to me?

Sillsbee. Why, I'se heard old massa say dere warnt no better blacksmith in all Virginny dan Black Job.

Job. What ob dat? I'se been in jail. Dey calls me jail-bird now.

Sillsbee. Yer hadn't oughter go 'sultin ob de gals.

Job. Look o' yere, nigger! I done had a good place yere—good wages, good victuals—dat's so. Well, de Judge, he kick me out. Den he gib information agin me, and dey trowed me into jail a whole year. What for? For kissin ob a colored wench dat warnt no good nohow.

Sillsbee. 'Twarnt de fust time yer made de Judge mad. Yer had warnin', Job. Now, yere's what yer do. Yer jest go to massa; tell him yer'e right down sorry, and mebbe he'll—

Job. I ain't sorry, I tells yer. [*Aside.*] Gor Almighty gib dis nigger a chance, I'll fix him.

Sillsbee. Yer must do somefin, Job; yer'll starve.

Job. I'se gwine down to Souf Carliny, where de colored folks has a show. Spose yer'll gib me somefin to eat for two or free days.

Sillsbee. I will dat. But I don't want to hear nuffin agin de ole massa. De Judge am good enuff for me. If 'twarnt for dat Kernel, gwine bossin' aroun', cussin' an' strikin', jest like de ole times—

Job. Oh, yer doesn't like to be struck, does yer?

Sillsbee. No man nebber struck me. I'se de foreman, nigger, ob dem boys.

Brand. [*From behind the scenes, right.*] Come along, you black devil.

Job. Hullo! What's dat?

Sillsbee. De Kernel, I reckon. Yer go inside, Job. Yer haint got no business yere, yer know. [*Exit Job into cottage.*]

[Enter BRAND and SNAKY PETE, right.]

Brand. [To SILLSBEE.] What are you about here? Where are the boys?

Sillsbee. Please, massa, dey struck work.

Brand. Struck work! D'ye know what time it is?

Sillsbee. I reckon 'bout an hour 'fore sundown, massa.

Brand. Oh, it is, is it? They are hired to work till sundown, ain't they? What are *you* hired for?

Sillsbee. Well, I'se hired to watch de boys. But yer see, sah, de ole massa, de Judge, he gib de boys leab to have a breakdown dis evenin', and dey's gwine to git ready.

Brand. Call them back.

Sillsbee. Why—Massa——

Brand. Call them back. D'ye hear? We have to pay the black rascals, and d——n 'em, I'll take it out of 'em.

Sillsbee. But, Massa Brand, de Judge, I tink he wouldn't mind——

Brand. See here. You talk too much. I've had my eye on you for some time. You want to be taken down. [Shakes whip.]

Sillsbee. Don't yer strike me, Massa Brand.

Brand. You impudent devil. Take that. [Lashes him.]

Sillsbee. By God, sah. You'll pay for dat.

Brand. Like old times, aint it? Come along, Pete. No, stay and watch that nigger. Mind he sets the boys to work.

[Exit, BRAND, left.]

Pete. [After a pause.] I say, Gash, I say.—Ain't yer gwine to call dem boys?

Sillsbee. No.

Pete. Why, Gash, yer heerd Massa Brand.

Sillsbee. I hain't got no massa. I go leab dis place, right away. Don't yer say massa to me. Git out.

Pete. Don't yer git mad, Mister Sillsby. I'se reel sorry for yer, I is.

Sillsbee. Shut up, I tell yer. Where's Job?

Job. [Comes forward from cabin.] I seen it. How yer feel now?

Pete. [Aside.] Oh, jiminy! If dere aint Black Job.

Sillsbee. Oh, Job, I'se gwine away. I aint no good now. I won't nebber be no good no more. [Crying.] I'se lost somefin here. I'se gwine along wid you right away, Job, down Souf.

Job. Dere ain't no hurry. Don't dey owe yer wages?

Sillsbee. I'se done got my wages. Look o' yere. [Shows arm.]

Job. Forshoo, boy. I reckon yer'll wait two or free days. Yer'd like to git eben wid him.

Sillsbee. Eben wid him? Show me how——

[JOB and SILLSBEE whisper.]

Job. [*Aloud, to PETE.*] Come yere, nigger! Yer's one ob de house darkies up yonder, I knows dat.

Pete. Yaas, Mister Job.

Job. Yer can unlock de doors, when yer wants to—I knows dat too?

Pete. Ya-as.

Job. I seen yer come down one night, when de old Judge, he went Norf. Yer had somefin in yer hand—jewls, and a gold watch, warn't it?

Pete. [*Trembling.*] Yer—yer—made me do it, Mister Job.

Job. What de matter wid yer? Yer see, Mr. Sillsby and me, we's gwine to pay yer a visit one of dese nights, when de white folks am gwine to bed. Ain't yer glad?

Pete. Yer—doesn't mean—to go—for to do nuffin?

Job. In course not. Nuffin! Just take a look roun'. We haint nebber seen de house—nebber—has we, Gash!

Sillsbee. Dere's somebody comin'. Let him go, Job.

Job. [*To PETE.*] Yer be here tomorrer evenin'. If yer don't—

[*Exit PETE, left. JOB and SILLSBEE withdraw toward cabin.*]

[*Enter, right, LEMOYNE and Doctor BOWLES.*]

Dr. B. That must be the house yonder. You ought to turn back now.

Lemoyme. Wait one moment, sir. [*Musingly.*] And there she dwells.

Dr. B. "The cynosure of neighboring eyes"—eh? Yes, my young friend, and what is more to our purpose, there dwells her father. We shall see, before I am much older, whether one old friend can persuade another.

Lemoyme. Oh, dear sir, what do I not owe you for this journey!

Dr. B. Nothing—if I fail. There are nine chances to one against me. But if I succeed, recollect your promise. You're to come into my office and practice with me. Stop! Not a word, but—good-by. You'll find lodgings, doubtless, at the tavern we passed just now.

Lemoyme. Good-by. I shall hear soon?

Dr. B. Within twenty-four hours.

[*Exit Doctor BOWLES, left.*]

Lemoyme. He will fail. But at least, he will see *her*—

Job. [*Aside to SILLSBEE.*] I tells yer he's one ob dem gemmen from way down Souf, where de colored folks am de big bugs.

Sillsbee. [*Aside to JOB.*] I likes de looks ob him frustrate. I'll ask him somefin'. [*To LEMOYNE.*] 'Scuse me, mister.

Lemoyme. Well? [*Aside.*] I wonder if these, likewise, find freedom only half a blessing?

Sillsbee. Yer see, sah, we's gwine to leab dis—me an' my frien'—an' we's tinkin' ob Souf Carliny. I t'ought mebbe yer knowed de folks down dere.

Lemoyne. I'm sorry, my friend—I've never been in South Carolina. Still, I might advise you. Tell me, can you read and write?

Sillsbee. Yaas, sah. Tank de Lord.

Lemoyne. Then you would have a chance. But—have you strong reasons for leaving Virginia?

Sillsbee. Please, mister, don't yer ask dem reasons. Dey's good uns.

Lemoyne. [*Looks at his watch.*] I should like to talk with you again. I must go now. Call and see me this evening. You'll find me at the tavern, a mile back.

Sillsbee. 'Scuse me, sah. Dat aint no place for a gemman, dat ain't. Dey's pore white trash ober dere. Dey'll go for sultin ob yer, sartain sure.

Lemoyne. I dare say. But I must find lodging somewhere.

Sillsbee. If yer'd be willin', mister, to stop along wid me—dere's my cabin.

Lemoyne. My friend, you're very good. But I couldn't think of it. I'm a perfect stranger to you.

Sillsbee. I'se only a pore nigger, I knows dat. But de ole mudder, she done fixed de cabin frustrate. Yer see, sah, she wur nuss to Miss Virginny up at de big house, and de white folks gib her heap o' tings!

Lemoyne. You say your mother was nurse to Miss Fairfax?

Sillsbee. Yaas, sah. We'll gib yer de best room, where Miss Virginny, she sits when she come see de ole mudder. Dere ain't nobody goes in dar but her.

Lemoyne. I thank you heartily. I accept.

Sillsbee. Come right along. [*LEMOYNE and SILLSBEE move toward cabin.*]

Job. [*To LEMOYNE.*] I reckon yer wasn't nebber roun' dese here diggins, was yer?

Lemoyne. Never.

Job. [*To SILLSBEE.*] Mebbe de gemman like see de fun dis evenin'. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Dey's gwine to hab a ole-fashion breakdown, de boys is. Gash an' me wasn't a gwine; but if yer want to—

Lemoyne. Much obliged. I'd prefer a quiet evening.

Sillsbee. Yer'd be right pleased, sah. De ole Judge and Miss Virginny, dey alluz comes out to hear de singin' an' sich.

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] Why shouldn't I go? [*To SILLSBEE.*] I would join you willingly, but I don't wish, for reasons, to wear this. [*Points to his coat.*]

Sillsbee. We'll fix dat. De ole woman'll scare up somefin. Come right in, sah.

[*Exeunt into cabin, LEMOYNE, SILLSBEE and JOB.*]

SCENE SECOND: *A reception room in Judge FAIRFAX'S house. Table; covered with letters, documents, &c.*

Miss Endicott. [*Discovered writing.*] Talk of business men. There's no Member of Congress has the correspondence I have. Take the Society for Relieving Indigent Females. They're perfectly devoted to me. [*Reads.*] "Indeed, dear madam, the charities of Boston miss sorely your valuable advice. Truly the vineyard is ample, but the laborers few. We know your eagerness to speed the good work, and if you would forward us a check for, say——" That's the third in a month. Dr. Bowles would say I ought to go home, to see how they spend this money.

[*Enter MAGGIE, left, with basket of flowers.*]

Miss E. Well, Maggie. What are you doing with flowers?

Maggie. They're Miss Vargie's, mum. We're after plucking 'em in the garden.

Miss E. Did Miss Fairfax feel strong enough to go out?

Maggie. She wad do it, mum. But, och! to see the poor craythur a stoopin' over the posies—so thin and white looking. By me sowl, 'twas a sorra sight. They're a'most gone, Maggie, sez she. They is, miss, sez I. When they come again, sez she—whispering-like to her own self—I may not see them. Sure ye will, miss, sez I, and many's the foine crop of 'em, God prosper ye. But I felt bad, mum.

Miss E. Ah, yes, yes. Where is she now?

Maggie. She's after coming in, mum. She'll be wid ye in a minnit. [*Exit MAGGIE, right.*]

Miss E. My poor, poor child. What a puzzle it all is—that such a one should droop and die, while a withered stick like me——

[*Enter VIRGINIA, left.*]

Virg. See, aunt, I've been foraging. This is for you. [*Presents bouquet.*]

Miss E. Sit down by me, dear. [*VIRG. sits.*] You're not tired?

Virg. A little. But I enjoyed myself so much. Are all those letters from Boston?

Miss E. Almost all. Let me see. [*Turns over letters.*] I may find some news——

Virg. What does Dr. Bowles write? I think he's quite recreant not to send a message to me.

Miss E. But he did, my dear. What am I thinking of? This came yesterday.

Virg. Does he say anything in it—does he mention—Mr. Le-moyne?

Miss E. He seems to see a great deal of him. And he has some plan—but doctors are so mysterious—I can't make out what it is.

Virg. Plan, aunt?

Miss E. For George, you know. About the West Indies, I fancy.

Virg. Send George away? Oh, he shall not. I must see him once more.

Miss E. There, see how excited you are. Why couldn't I hold my tongue. When I promised the Judge too——

Virg. He does not know, poor father, how ill his little girl is. You must not tell him. But I would have liked, so much, to see George before the eyes he opened are——

Miss E. Don't, Virgie. Don't make an old woman cry.

Virg. Dear aunt, never mind my foolish talk. I may be better soon, who knows? And next Spring we will go North again—to Nahant, dear.

Miss E. I hope so.

Virg. Forgive me if I come to you when I am gloomy and down-hearted, and make you gloomy too. If I had my mother! Tell me something about her.

Miss E. You don't remember her, darling, do you? You were only four and she but twenty-five when you lost her. She was a lovely woman.

Virg. What was she like—like the portrait in the library?

Miss E. That has her expression exactly.

Virg. The face is so mild, so gentle. And the eyes have a far-off look, as if she were gazing through a mist and saw a light behind it. Do you know, aunt, I have sat for hours trying to read her spirit in her features—you can, they say—and sometimes I fancy——

Miss E. What do you fancy, darling?

Virg. That perhaps she would have felt as I do; would have honored George, and, seeing his great heart and his fair deeds, been not ashamed to love him, in spite of his dark face. Say she would, auntie. Say——

[*Enter, left, Judge FAIRFAX and BRAND.*]

Judge F. [*To BRAND.*] Well, well; what does it matter? Let them enjoy themselves. [*To Miss E.*] Good, evening, sister. [*To VIRG.*] And how is my white rose?

Miss E. [*To BRAND.*] How is your tobacco coming on, Colonel?

Brand. The crop is backward, ma'am. Niggers shirk their work. Fact is, they impose on the Judge. Here they are, to-night, fiddling and shouting, as if they owned the place.

Judge F. By the way, sister, you wished to hear a plantation song. Suppose we make up a party, and go down to the negro quarters?

Virg. Yes, we'll all go! Don't shake your head, auntie. Come, father.

Judge F. [*Aside to VIRG.*] Don't tell your aunt; I want to surprise her. Doctor Bowles is in the hall.

Virg. [*Aside to Judge F.*] You can't mean it. [*To Miss E.*] Auntie, come. You don't know what's in store for us.

[*Exeunt omnes, right.*]

SCENE THIRD: *A grove of sycamores. At rear of stage the negro quarters. Torchlights. Negroes traverse stage at rear, singing. Music.*

[*Enter, right, JUDGE F., VIRG., BRAND, Dr. BOWLES, Miss ENDICOTT.*]

Dr. B. [*To JUDGE F.*] Well, sir, you promised us a treat; you've kept your word.

Judge F. [*To VIRG.*] It is a pretty scene, is it not, daughter?

[*Exit BRAND, suddenly, left. VIRGINIA sits down at left of stage. The others stand.*]

Judge F. Where's Brand?

Miss E. Hush! They are going to sing.

[*Negroes at rear, sing (quartette) "Virginia Rosebud." "I had a rosebud, in my garden growing," &c.*]

[*Enter, BRAND, left.*]

Brand. [*Aside to JUDGE.*] You saw me leave you, just now.

Judge F. [*Aside to BRAND*] Anything wrong?

Brand. I'll swear I saw that rascal, Job, prowling about the brush, yonder.

Judge F. Black Job? I hope not. He's scarcely out of jail yet.

Brand. Yes, he is. I met Pete, the house servant, and shook the truth out of him. It seems he saw Job, this evening, talking with Sillsbee. I'll find him anyhow; if I can't, the dogs can.

Judge. Stop! I don't want Black Job about the place; he's a bad man. But no violence. Here, I'll go with you.

[*Exeunt JUDGE and BRAND at rear.*]

Dr. B. Shall we walk?

Miss E. We might take a look at the cabins. What do you say, Virgie?

Virg. Let me wait for you here. I'm a little tired. [*Refuses Miss E.'s shawl.*] Oh, I'm perfectly warm.

[*Miss ENDICOTT and Dr. BOWLES draw toward rear of stage.*]

Dr. B. Looking at VIRG.] Poor child.

Miss E. Is she looking worse than you expected?

Dr. B. My friend, she is far from well. Still, I trust, with care and repose of mind——

Miss E. There's no fear of excitement here. And now, Doctor, about George? [*Exeunt, at rear, Miss E. and Dr. B.*]

Virg. How kind they all are. And yet, I am so unhappy.

[*Enter, left, LEMOYNE, disguised as a field hand.*]

Lemoyne. Miss Fairfax.

Virg. Who speaks? Who calls me? [*Turns.*]. You?

Lemoyne. Yes, Miss Fairfax. You do not know me?

Virg. Mr. Lemoyne! I fear—I ought—

Lemoyne. Give me one little moment. And ah, be gentle. It is so easy to wound *me*. I came only to see you, not to speak. Yes, I borrowed *these*, that I might pass unquestioned. I did not mean to say one word. But you seemed less merry than you were—less gay. You sighed, and my heart ached. Forgive me—

Virg. George! George! Forgive,—when I could die happy with your voice in my ears? Speak to me,—when I know your words by heart? What else had I to comfort me through these dreary weeks? How long is it since that last evening? Only a month?

Lemoyne. Dearest, if we measure time by heart-beats, such months count for years.

Virg. Oh, that evening! If I *could* forget it. And one hour before we were so happy. In the long, wakeful night it comes back to me—that fearful scene. I see you standing there—so grave, so calm. I hear their cruel taunts. Oh, George!

Lemoyne. I remember nothing but your face. Your father's anger? Oh, 'tis not that, but his calm reason, which is terrible. We might conquer prejudice, but not convictions. I foresee too plainly that Doctor Bowles will plead in vain.

Virg. Dr. Bowles! Then you came with him?

Lemoyne. He has been most kind, most generous. He has made his house my home. He wishes me to become his partner. And now he has come here because he dreamed, by such a proof of his esteem, and with such a prospect of prosperity, he might persuade your father to—

Virg. Heaven reward him for the wish—

Lemoyne. But 'tis only a dream,—I know it. I brought no such hope with me. But I have a hope. It gleamed on me when I saw you here—so pale, so ill. A wild hope, but 'tis sweet.

Virg. What hope, George?

Lemoyne. That you might indeed love me—blindly, utterly—with a love like mine. Would you know what that means? To find the heart so o'ermastered that not one thought, one feeling, dare lift its head before the eye of love. To feel, beside the magic of that word, that home, friends, country, are but idle spells. Miss Fairfax, it is a fearful power to hold a human creature, his hopes, his ~~fears~~, in the hollow of that hand. But to use it kindly, to save, to comfort, and to bless—oh, that is godlike. Would you believe this—

Virg. And if I do?

Lemoyne. Then—then—I would brush aside the scruples which bade me not thrust my claims between you and a father's care. I will be selfish. No, not selfish; where hearts are in

perfect sympathy there is no such word. But, be it so, I *am* selfish. What would your friends have? I am the son of a slave—in race an alien, in caste a Pariah—a thing, at best, to be patronized and pitied—a social protégé, not a social peer. I have nothing in the world but you—no name, no home, no friends. Virginia, I want my own! I claim *you*! Come, dearest, put your hand in mine. There are other lands than this; come forth, forgetting and forsaking, but blest and blessing me.

Virg. Oh, George, if I could think it right——

[*Music draws nearer. Voices behind the scenes, right.*]

Lemoyne. Come dearest—my star—my savior.

Virg. Hark! Hush, they are coming back! Don't stay, George; don't meet father now. To-morrow Doctor Bowles shall talk to him, and it may be— But I will write. [*The stage begins to fill at rear.*] They are here. Quick. Where to find you?

Lemoyne. At the cabin of a man named Sillsbee. But, my love, my love! Remember! Oh, God! is this the last time?

Virg. Hope, George, and pray. Good night!

[*Exit LEMOYNE, left.*]

[*The stage has filled at rear. Torchlights. Music. Enter singers as before. Same song—"I had a rosebud," &c.*]

[*Enter JUDGE F., DOCTOR B., MISS ENDICOTT, and BRAND, at rear.*]

Miss Endicott. [*Coming forward.*] Well, Virgie. Why, mercy on us! How flushed, how wild, you look!

Virg. [*Embracing her.*] Oh, auntie! I have seen him!

Curtain falls. End of Act IV.

ACT V.

SCENE FIRST: *Same as Act IV., Scene First. LEMOYNE discovered seated at right, and behind SILLSBEE'S cabin. Time, 8 P. M.*

Lemoyne. A whole day, and not one word. She might have written, surely. Is it possible, a daughter's prayers—? Fool that I am—he will never yield. Oh, God, and I cannot hate him, for the man means well. She will never leave him; I was mad to ask it. Oh, Virginia, my saint, my angel! Ask *you* to grieve one that loves you!

[*Enter, left, Doctor BOWLES.*]

Dr. B. The last cabin on the left. This must be the place.

Lemoyne. [*Rising.*] Dr. Bowles?

Dr. B. You, there? [*They shake hands.*] My friend, I bring no good news.

Lemoyne. I expected none.

Dr. B. This morning, after breakfast, I followed the Judge into the library, and began about you. I must have talked an hour, and we were growing warm, I promise you, when in comes Virginia. Oh, George, how that girl loves you. She made me blubber, sir; blubber, like a boy, and the Judge was giving way—at least, I thought so—when suddenly the poor girl dropped like a stone.

Lemoyne. [*Falls upon the seat.*] Merciful Father!

Dr. B. Be calm, man. She lives, though 'twas long before I durst say so. She was too weak to be moved. She still lies on the sofa, where I left her but now.

Lemoyne. Oh, sir, go back to her, go back!

Dr. B. I must, presently. But the poor child begged me to see you to-night, and would not sleep until I promised. Tell him, she said, that we dreamed a dream, last night, of a world where duty was unknown. We are awake now; but tell him, she said, that if I live—and I will try so hard, for his sake—he shall not find my heart less true to him because it keeps faith with others.

Lemoyne. Go on.

Dr. B. That's all. And now this from me: Our present business is to save this girl. It's a thousand pities you met last night. That can't be helped; but this you can do—leave this place at once.

Lemoyne. I will go.

Dr. B. Dear boy, you understand. Wait in Richmond for me and for better times. Shake hands.

[*Exit, left, Dr. BOWLES.*]

Lemoyne. How dark it is. Oh, God! all is dark now. Almighty and all-merciful! Father of the white man and the black, save her and pity me!

[*Enter, right, BLACK JOB. He whistles.*]

Sillsbee. [*Enter, from cabin.*] Who's dere? Dat you, Job?

Job. Yaas. Where's Pete?

Sillsbee. Dunno.

Job. What's de matter? Yer ain't skeert a'ready?

Sillsbee. I'se most shamed, I is, to go roun' stickin' knives into folks dat's gwine to sleep.

Job. Yer most lubs de Kernel, doesn't yer? Massa Brand nebber go for to mean nuffin; he gib you *dis* for lub. Gor Almighty, doesn't yer see? If he done dat ar to a white gemman, he nebber leab dis place alive. But he knowed yer was a pore, mis'able——

Sillsbee. I'll cut his troat dis night.

Lemoyne. [*Aside.*] What villainy is this? [*Listens.*]

Job. Now yer begin to talk. Look yere, Gash; dis yere's what we's gwine to do. De white folks up yonder, dey's all in

bed 'fore 'leven, all but de Judge. Den, yer see, while you-uns is gwine up stairs to fix de Kernel, I'll 'tend to de ole man——

Lemoyne. Will you? Thank heaven, I may yet do something for her and her's.

[*Exit LEMOYNE at rear of cabin, left.*]

Job. What's dat?

Sillsbee. Nuffin. I'spects de ole 'oman's knoeckin' roun'.

[*They whisper. Enter PETE, left.*]

Job. [*To PETE.*] Come yere, nigger. Yere' late. Now min' what I tells yer. We's gwine along by de big house, Gash an' me, by'm by. When we gib a whistle like dis, we want yer to come down.

Pete. 'Taint no use, Mister Job. I'se tought it all ober. Massa Brand hear me, sure.

Job. Spose he does?

Pete. Den he git up, sartin. Dere aint nobody shufflin' roun' dat time o' night. 'Taint like de fore-part ob de evenin'.

Job. Dat's yer game, is it? [*Whispers to SILLSBEE. Then aloud to PETE.*] Come on. We's gwine wid yer, right along. Yer kin stow away Gash up stairs. Dis nigger'll take care ob hisself.

Pete. I wout do nuffin ob de kind—dere!

Job. Why, Pete? [*Shows bracelet.*] You nebber seed dis afore, did yer? Yer didn't tink I'd go for to sell *dat*? Why, it belongs to Miss Verginny, dat ar does. Yer mis'able tief, yer come along. If dey kotch me dis time dere'll be a pair ob us.

[*Exit JOB, SILLSBEE, and PETE, left.*]

SCENE SECOND: *Reception room in Judge FAIRFAX's house.*

Same Scene as Act IV, Scene 2. MAGGIE discovered, dusting furniture, &c. Enter, left, LEMOYNE.

Lemoyne. I called to see Miss Endicott. I was shown in here.

Maggie. And is it yer own self, sir? Sit ye down. She's with Miss Vargie, in the next room. Sure we've had trouble the day.

Lemoyne. I know it. I'll detain her but one moment. Stay. You would do me a great favor if you'd mention my name privately to Miss Endicott. I'd prefer Miss Fairfax did not hear it.

Maggie. Be aisy, sir.

[*Exit MAGGIE, right.*]

Lemoyne. Only this wall between us. This lath and plaster between bliss and despair. The next room—it might as well be the next world.

[*Enter Miss ENDICOTT, right.*]

Lemoyne. [*Springs toward her.*] How is she?

Miss E. Her eyes are closed. I think she sleeps. But, George, why do you——?

Lemoyne. Don't chide me. I am going to-night. I shall never trouble you again.

Miss E. What do you mean?

Lemoyne. I don't know. What does *my* life matter? I did not come to speak of such a useless thing. Listen, Miss Endicott. I happened—no matter how—to hear something of a cowardly plot, aimed at your brother and his nephew. Two negroes, made desperate by some fancied wrong, have found means to gain admittance to the house, and intend to-night, when your people are asleep—

Miss E. Mercy on us!

Lemoyne. Luckily, we are in time. You need only warn the servants.

[*Enter BRAND, right.*]

Brand. They told me this fellow was here. Miss Endicott, this is too much. You know how the Judge feels.

Miss E. I know he feels and speaks like a gentleman. Colonel Fairfax, for shame! Do you know what brought Doctor Lemoyne here? But for him you might have been murdered in your bed.

Brand. A pretty story. [*To LEMOYNE.*] Who are the precious scoundrels?

Lemoyne. I will not tell you. [*To Miss E.*] These men were utter strangers, and they lodged me, fed me. I will balk their scheme, but not betray them. [*To BRAND.*] Your color, sir, has no monopoly of honor.

Brand. You impudent nigger. Their names?

Miss E. [*To BRAND.*] How dare you insult my friend! How dare you insult *me* in my brother's house!

Brand. Very well, madam. We'll see what your brother says. [*Exit BRAND, right.*]

Lemoyne. Don't mind him; don't quarrel. *She* needs you. Good-by, old friend.

Miss E. Don't go, George. I am afraid.

Lemoyne. What, of those men? Have no fear. I go to find them, and tell them their scheme is foiled.

[*Exeunt LEMOYNE and Miss E., left.*]

SCENE THIRD: *The Library at Fairfax Manor. Long windows, opening on veranda. At left, large fireplace. Over mantel, portrait of Mrs. Fairfax. At right of fireplace, sofa; in front, large arm-chair. VIRGINIA discovered reclining on sofa.*

Virginia. I thought I heard his voice. It was a dream. He has my message; he has gone away. Perhaps with doubt at his heart. He has no friends, he said, and I have many. Oh, George, is the voice of duty sweeter because it points to a sunny home? Sweet? Yes, and bitter as the tolling of a funeral bell. Oh, love and duty! To other girls you are twin blossoms plucked lightly from a thornless stem. But if I touch you my fingers

bleed. Oh, why need it be so? Is it manly or is it childish to offset color against character, complexion against heart and brain? Better be blind, far better, as *I* was when I knew him first. Oh, father, I am learning to reason, and to doubt if you can love me truly when you ask—— [*She catches sight of her mother's portrait and sinks upon her knees.*] Forgive me, mother. Your eyes look sad, reproachful. It was wrong to think those thoughts. [*Enter, left, JUDGE F. Seeing VIRG. kneeling, he stops.*] Yes, dear; I know what you would say. You loved my father, as I love George. You were scarcely older than I am when you went away. But you did not leave him *quite* desolate. You could not be happy, dearest, where you are, if that were so. You left *me* to comfort him; to take your place, mother; to gladden his declining years. Oh, help me to be a good daughter. Oh, mother, help and pity. I have none to turn to—nothing but your dead face.

Judge F. [*Comes forward, weeping.*] God bless you, my own dear daughter. [*He lifts her in his arms, and places her on the sofa.*]

Judge F. [*continues.*] My child, I wish to ask your pardon for the harsh things I said, of one who deserves more than I can give him. I will write and ask *his* pardon. Do not mistake, I cannot consent to what you—to what he wishes. Do not turn away. Virginia, as I hope to see Heaven, and meet your mother there, I honor and esteem your lover, from the bottom of my heart. I say that you did well to love him. But I promised that angel *there*, to guard her little one from pain and sorrow, and I know that your union with him would be certain misery to both. You smile hopefully. You do not guess, poor lamb, the pitiless rigour of our social laws, or the terrible vengeance exacted for their violation. How should you know that the social blight would fall not on the man, but on the woman? That *his* doom would be to look on and see you suffer? Can you wish those who love you such a doom? No, dearest: trust an old man's wisdom. With these time-tried eyes I look across the coming years, and I see it is my bitter duty to bid you think of him no more. It is not prejudice that speaks—it is my reason, illumined by a father's love. [*VIRG. sinks back.*] But you are tired, dear; too tired and weak to talk.

Virg. [*Raising herself on her arm.*] It is not that. I was trying to answer you, and I cannot. But, oh, I feel there is something wrong somewhere. [*Sinks back.*] You are right, father, I *am* weary.

Judge F. Rest your head-so. Try to sleep, darling. I will sit beside you.

[*VIRGINIA closes her eyes, and her father presently falls asleep. Meanwhile BLACK JOB opens the window, left, and enters.*]

Black Job. [*Drawing knife, and stealing behind the JUDGE. Aside.*] I'se done got my turn, dis time!

[Enter LEMOYNE, same window.]

Virg. [Seeing JOB, and springing up.] Help! Help!

Lemoync. [Seizing JOB's arm, as he is about to strike.]
Down, ruffian!

[LEMOYNE and JOB grapple. Enter, right, BRAND and house
servants; left, Miss ENDICOTT, Dr. BOWLES, and MAGGIE.]

Brand. [Fires pistol.] Take that!

Lemoync. [Staggers.] Ah!

Judge F. [To LEMOYNE.] How come you here, sir? You,
surely, are no thief!

Miss E. [Supports LEMOYNE.] He came before, to warn you,
and now, poor boy, he came to save.

Virg. [Wildly.] Who speaks of my George! Did not I see
him, bounding on that fearful man, who would have killed my
father? He is hurt! George, speak to me.

Lemoync. I—I meant—I tried— [Falls.]

Judge F. [Supporting VIRG. To LEMOYNE.] On my knees,
sir, I ask your pardon. And oh, forgive me. I denied what
you wished. But I thought I was right.

Lemoync. I believe you. It was a hard question—but I
loved her. Virginia—hereafter— [Dies.]

Miss E. [Weeping.] He's gone!

Virg. [Breaking from her father and throwing herself upon
the body.] Father! He is mine now!

[Curtain falls. The end.]



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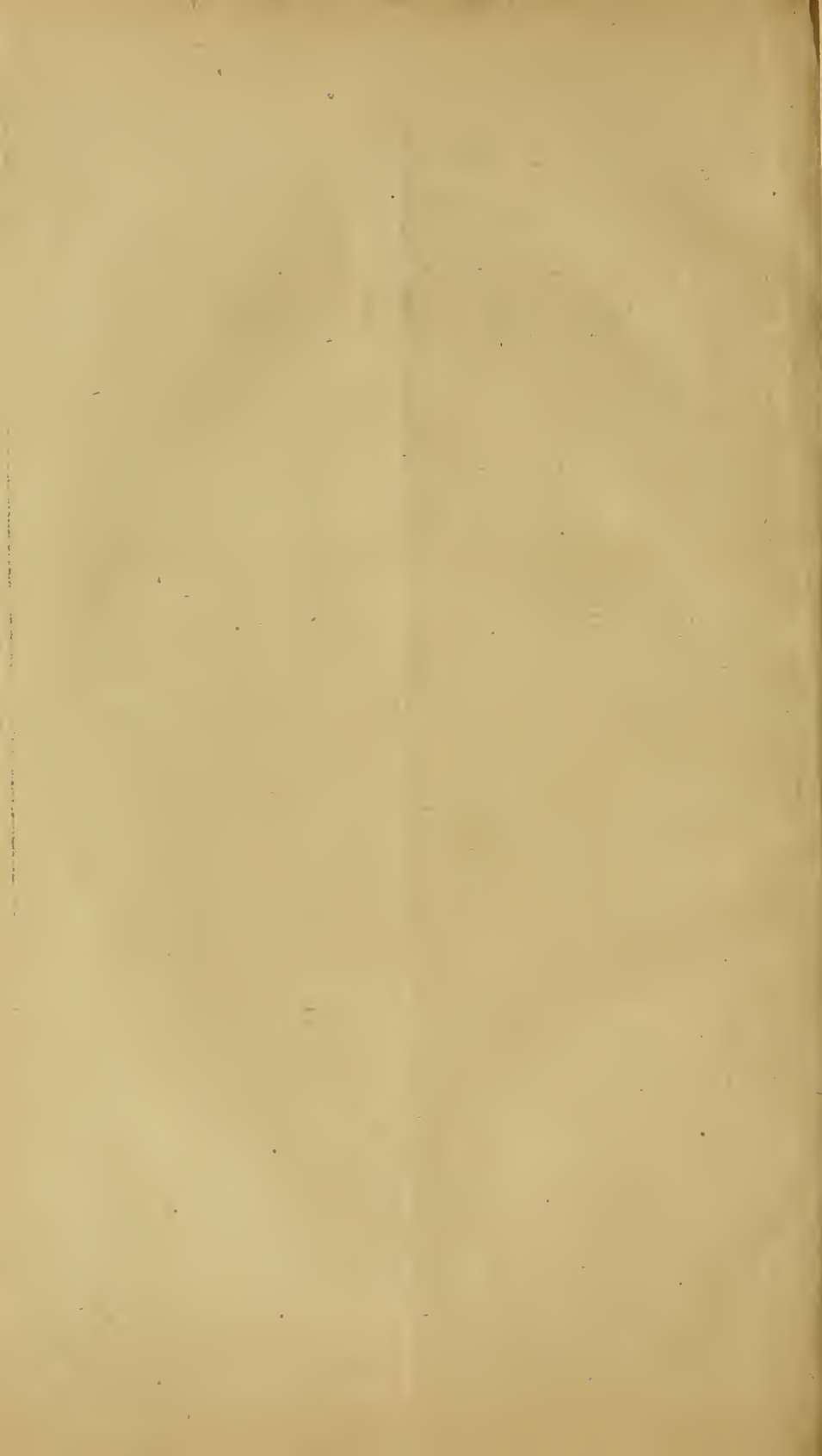
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